

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8079

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 09807

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BE, UR

SUBJECT: GROMYKO TREATS BRUSSELS TO FROSTY CHARM

BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL

SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO SPENDS 48 HOURS IN
BRUSSELS SPREADING GENERAL GOODWILL AND AVOIDING THE HARD
QUESTIONS. PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS AND FOREIGN MINISTER
VAN ELSLANDE WERE DISAPPOINTED WITH GROMYKO'S BLAND
UNREADINESS TO ENTER INTO SERIOUS DISCUSSION ON EAST-WEST
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RELATIONS, MIDEAST, SOUTHERN AFRICA OR ANYTYING ELSE. BEL-

GIAN AGREED TO OPENING OF A SOVIET CONSULATE IN
ANTWERP THIS AUTUMN. END SUMMARY END CONFIDENTIAL.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO STOPPED OVER IN BRUSSELS
AT BELGIAN INVITATION OCTOBER 3-5 EN ROUTE FROM NEW YORK
TO COPENHAGEN. HE MET WITH TINDEMANS EIGHTY MINUTES
SUNDAY AFTERNOON. ON MONDAY HE PAID A COURTESY CALL ON
SENATE PRESIDENT (AND EX-FOREIGN MINISTER) HARMEL AND
SPENT NINETY MINUTES WITH VAN ELSLANDE. ON TUESDAY HE
CALLED ON THE KING AND HELD A SOMEWHAT LIGHTLY ATTENDED
NEWS CONFERENCE AT THE FORTRESS-LIKE SOVIET EMBASSY.

2. FOR THE PRESS GROMYKO SALUTED THE "FAVORABLE"
DEVELOPMENT OF BELGO-SOVIET RELATIONS PARTICULARLY IN
THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL SPHERES. HE PRAISED THE
BELGIAN PEOPLE AS LOVERS OF PEACE AND SUPPORTERS OF
EAST -WEST DETENTE. ON INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS GROMYKO
LAID HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE BELGRADE FOLLOW-UP MEETING
TO CSCE, ASSERTING THAT IT SHOULD BE THE OCCASION FOR
NEW STEPS FORWARD DOWN THE DETENTE ROAD. HE SAID THE
BELGRADE MEETING SHOULD NOT BE A BACKWARD, LOOKING
AFFAIR IN WHICH THE PARTICIPANTS SPEND TIME DEBATING
WHAT THEY DID OR FAILED TO DO TO IMPLEMENT THE
HELSINKI PLEDGES. HE WENT OVER FAMILIAR GROUND IN
RE-STATING THE SOVIET CALL FOR A WORLD DISARMAMENT CON-
FERENCE AND FOR HIS RECENT PROPOSAL FOR A NON-USE OF
FORCE TREATY.

3. GROMYKO COOLLY FIELDDED QUESTIONS ON EUROCOMMUNISM
AND THE GERMAN ELECTION OUTCOME. ON THE FORMER HE MADE
TWO POINTS: (1) ALL THE COMMUNIST PARTIES WHICH MET
IN BERLIN LAST SUMMER PLEDGED TO FIGHT FOR PEACE,
AND (2) " THE COMMUNISM WHICH WE ARE BUILDING IN OUR
COUNTRY IS AN AUTHENTIC COMMUNISM WITH A SCIENTIFIC
BASIS FOUNDED ON THE TEACHING OF MARX, ENGELS AND
LENIN." ON THE FRG ELECTIONS HE FOUND THE OUTCOME
"POSITIVE" SINCE IT RETAINS IN POWER THE GOVERNMENT
WHICH "TURNED A PAGE OF HISTORY IN RELATIONS BETWEEN
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BONN AND COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE."

4. AS GROMYKO LEFT THE SOVIET EMBASSY HE DROVE BY A
GROUP OF TWO DOZEN JEWISH YOUTHS CARRYING PLACARDS
AND BANNERS PROTESTING SOVIET EMIGRATION POLICY.

END UNCLASSIFIED. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL

5. WE WERE BRIEFED BY THE CHEFS DE CABINET OF TINDEMANS AND VAN ELSLANDE (GRAULS AND VAN BELLINGHEN) ON GROMYKO'S CLOSED -DOOR DISCUSSIONS. WITH TINDEMANS GROMYKO DWELT ON DISARMAMENT AND NON-USE OF FORCE THEMES AS WELL AS NECESSITY OF KEEPING UP DETENTE MOMENTUM. TINDEMANS WAS UNABLE TO DRAW GROMYKO INTO A NUANCED DISCUSSION ON ANY TOPIC. GROMYKO SIMPLY FAILED TO REPLY TO AWKWARD QUESTIONS OR BURIED THEM IN A FLOW OF POLITE BUT TRITE LANGUAGE. HE ENDED BY INVITING TINDEMANS TO MOSCOW (DATE UNSETTLED) TO CONTINUE THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. TINDEMANS SUMMED UP HIS IMPRESSION TO COLLEAGUES AFTERWARD: " UNIMPRESSIVE AND DISAPPOINTING."

6. THE VAN ELSLANDE TALK WAS MORE OF THE SAME EXCEPT THAT VAN ELSLANDE WAXED A LITTLE SARCASTIC AFTER GROMYKO INFORMED HIM THAT SOVIET AND BELGIAN VIEWS ON THE MIDEAST WERE CLEARLY " VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL". GROMYKO, NOT TO BE PROVOKED, SIMPLY DID NOT NOTICE THE SARCASM. VAN BELLINGHEN , WHO WAS PRESENT, SAID, " IT BECAME CLEAR THAT GROMYKO WAS DETERMINED TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WITH AGREEMENT ON MAJOR POINTS AND NO ARGUMENTS."

7. DISCUSSION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WAS EQUALLY THIN. THE BELGIANS AGREED TO A PROTOCOL TO AN EXISTING CONSULAR AGREEMENT PERMITTING THE SOVIETS TO OPEN A CONSULATE IN ANTWERP THIS AUTUMN WITH COMPETENCE FOR ZEEBRUGGE AND OSTEND AS WELL. THE ONLY QUO BELGIUM ASKED FOR THAT QUID (IT HAS NO INTEREST IN THE SOVIET OFFER OF A CONSULATE IN LENINGRAD OR ODESSA) WAS A PROMISE OF EXPEDITED AIR ACCESS BY BELGIAN OFFICIALS TO LENINGRAD, ODESSA OR VENTSPILS SHOULD THEIR PRESENCE CONFIDENTIAL

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BE REQUIRED AT THOSE PORTS.

8. VAN BELLINGHEN SAID THAT IN THEIR POST MORTEM TINDEMANS AND VAN ELSLANDE WISHED THEY HAD BORED IN A BIT HARDER ON GROMYKO. THEY HAD AN UNEASY FEELING THEY WERE BEING USED. INDIRECTLY, SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS, COMMENTING WITH SATISFACTION ON GROMYKO VISIT, CONFIRMED THEIR IMPRESSION. NOT TOO MUCH OF IMPORTANCE TOOK PLACE, WE WERE TOLD TODAY BY SOVIET DIPLOMATS. THE REAL MEANING OF THE VISIT, THEY SAID WAS TO SHOW THAT "OUR FOREIGN MINISTER CAN VISIT WESTERN EUROPEAN CAPITALS AND PUT FORWARD OUR POINT OF VIEW ON IMPORTANT MATTERS JUST LIKE MR. KISSINGER CAN." FIRESTONE

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